CEREBUS 59,60, and 61 have been reprinted. This is one of the longest alternative comix to remain in print. It ranks close to ZAP.

I see the British nose is as blue as ever. A shipment of COMPLETE CRUMBS was ordered destroyed because of all that nasty sex stuff. Well, whaddaya gonna do? Sex is fun and God forbid that anyone should have fun on her bovine majesty's turf. Just think if England ever crawled out of the middle ages and 86ed the parasitic royal family, how would they attract the tourists? I guess they could all go to San Francisco and watch the Gay Parade, but would it be the same?

Send Matthew Guest a buck and get SNAP HAPPIE. 3007 Cockrell Ave., Ft. Worth, TX 76109.

Robert Pasternak's ACID MAN 15, a trilogy of mini-art is $1.50 pp from Clay Geerdes, Box 7094, Berkeley 94707.

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IN CASE YOU THOUGHT DISINFORMATION WAS NEW

On December 6, 1890, Baum [L. Frank] wrote a rather edgy "funny" column for his newspaper in Aberdeen, Dakota Territory. He turns inside out the official American line that the Sioux Indians were getting ready to massacre all the whites. Baum pretends to interview an Indian Chief who tells him that the Indians are terrified of being massacred by the whites. Two weeks after this story was published, the U. S. Seventh Cavalry slaughtered three hundred Indian men, women, and children at nearby Wounded Knee.

--Gore Vidal

Question is why did MAD, still the top selling comic magazine, lose 102,480 readers in 1990? TV GUIDE lost 449,378 readers in 1990. That should tell you something about the new poverty in this decade of ultimate greed. Even PLAYBOY dropped over 100,000 readers. Imagine that! Teenaged boys having to whack off over last month's Playmate!

Eric Vincent illustrated AESOP'S FABLES for CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED and the artwork is exquisite. Look for this one at your local store.

Gilbert Shelton did the cover for EL VIBORA 137. $9 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain.

I loved CULTURAL JETLAG 1, the new book by Tom Roberts and Jim Siergey from Fantagraphics.

Clark Dissmeyer's PROPAGANDA WAR 8 is free from him for an SASE. POB 1531, Kearney, NE 68848.

TWISTED IMAGE 30 is $1/stamp from Ace Backwards, 1630 University Ave., Apt. 26, Berkeley, CA 94703.

David Lasky has done a rather weird team-up newave comic called **BETTY VS NOSFERATU**. The Betty is a tracing of Betty Page and Nosferatu was the earliest version of Dracula done in German in 1922. $1.50 pp from him, 2705 20th St., San Francisco, CA 94110. His **ARRABLATA** is also 1.50 pp.

The American vice is explanation.

--Gore Vidal

The latest from Rip Off Press is **RIP OFF COMIX #30.** If you can't get these comix in your area, send a buck to Fred Todd at POB 4686, Auburn, CA 95604 and he'll send you the latest catalog.

The success of the American dream, like the success of MasterCard and the Republican Party, presupposes the eager and uncritical consumption of junk in all its commercial declensions.

Lewis Lapham, **HARPER'S**, July, 1991.

Turns out **Betty Page** will not be making the convention rounds this summer. It was all a put-on that originated from Larry Shell.

ALL IN THE MIND

Not long after construction began on the Brooklyn Bridge, designer Washington Roebling was trapped for several hours during a fire in one of the underwater caissons and came out of it with a severe case of the bends, an excruciating disease in which nitrogen bubbles gather in the bloodstream. Nearly killed by the attack, he was thereafter an invalid, unable to leave the top floor room where he and his wife set up house in Brooklyn Heights. There Washington Roebling sat every day for many years, watching the progress of the bridge through a telescope, sending his wife down every morning with his instructions, drawing elaborate color pictures for the foreign workers who spoke no English so they would understand what to do next, and the remarkable thing was that the whole bridge was literally in his head; every piece of it had been memorized, down to the tiniest bits of steel and stone, and though Washington Roebling never set foot on the bridge, it was totally present inside him, as though by the end of all those years it had somehow grown into his body.

Paul Auster
GHOSTS, 1986.

I'm always amazed at the shabbiness of the awards America gives for achievement. A man wins every event in the Olympic Games and what is his reward? He is given the privilege of selling cameras on television. Another man quarterbacks his football team through the Super Bowl to a World Championship more than once and what is he allowed to do? Sell cars on television. The corporate hucksters in this country think they are elevating their products by associating them with athletic superiority but I don't see it that way. I see them degrading the athletes by making them nothing more than products. As for the movies, well, a fine actor can play an athlete, but athletes make terrible actors. Most are all right in motion, but when they have to stand and talk, forget it. Try to imagine for a moment what would happen if they gave Lou Ferrigno the lines and painted Bill Bixby green in those terrible HULK movies on television.

THE SCHLOCKETEER

I saw **THE ROCKETEER** and it confirms that the Disney company can take a good story and fuck it up royally. The film has some great stunt work and the actors do what they can with the glib lines stuck in their mouths, but for a fantasy to work it has to remain credible within its own framework and **ROCKETEER** does not. Where a few well placed shots would be effective, the Disney hacks throw in a chorus of gangsters and FBI shooters armed with Thompson submachine guns and the result is as ridiculous in this film as it was in the **DICK TRACY** bomb. Even an 8-year-old kid knows the FBI would cover the back entrance of a house. Give us a break.

The film is ironic from beginning to end, particularly for those who are politically and historically aware. Nazi rocketry was assimilated into the United States military-industrial complex at the end of WW2 and it served as the basis for the development of the missiles which were recently used to destroy a third world country. As for the rocket backpack worn by the Rocketeer, it looks great onscreen, but one can't help noticing that young Cliff would have barbequed his asshole every time he took off. Even if he had worn asbestos slacks [which would have been so heavy he couldn't even stand up in them], you can bet that he would never reproduce his kind after having his chestnuts baked in that rocket stream. The gimmick appeared back in an episode of Buck Rogers and was used in one of the early James Bond films.

THE ROCKETEER is set in 1938 and ranks as a super pot boiler. The writers threw in everything that came along. One must note that the heroines in 1938 adventure movies were usually blonde, not brunette. In '38, brunettes were the heavies. Dale Arden was a blonde and so was Flash Gordon. The Disney problem is overkill. Too much of everything too fast. When the second plane crashes into the second gas truck, it's **TERMINATOR** flashback. I suggest the entire company sit down and watch **DOCTOR NO** again. I enjoyed the flying action, but hated the random vandalism.

ROCKETEER even has the heroine play most of her scenes with the villain [Tim "James Bond" Dalton]!

The early comic book stories were much better, thanks to Dave Stevens. Those little toy figures are too shitty to discuss. Worse than the Dick Tracy junk. A long boooooo to the marketeers. C.G.

A NEW FERLINGHETTI BIOGRAPHY

There was a poetry revival in the early 1950's and one of the seminal figures in this renaissance was Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who founded City Lights Books in 1953 with Pete Martin. So what has this got to do with underground comix? Well, Ferlinghetti was one of the first to sell them in his store and he was one of the first busted when one of the brain police looked between the covers of **ZAP** and found Crumb's put-on about Joe Blow. No conviction and for years underground comix were on the shelf next to the alley so one could look at the latest Crumbic madness and see who came and went from Vesuvio's at the same time. That alley was renamed for Jack Kerouac in 1978. If you want to wallow a bit in Beatific nostalgia, check out Barry Silesky's biography of **FERLINGHETTI** (Warner Books, 1991). I found this to be a pleasant and accurate portrait of the poet who was certainly an influence on my generation. I was a college student when Beat was the going trend in San Francisco's North Beach and I doubt if there was a single weekend that I didn't spend a couple of hours hanging around City Lights with my friends. Shig Murau was at the front counter, but Ferlinghetti was often in the store or in a nearby coffee house. I hate a number of conversations with him during the time I was a reporter for the Los Angeles **FREE PRESS** and I remember him as friendly and congenial. The last time I saw him in person he was walking across the parking lot at Fort Mason. One of Benny Bufano's statues had fallen on the asphalt and Ferlinghetti was looking at it when the camera stopped his image for a moment.

Ferlinghetti began to publish small pocket sized books of poetry early in the fifties and I bought and read most of the early ones, Allen Ginsberg's **HOWL**, Mike McClure's Beast poetry, Ferlinghetti's own **PICTURES OF THE GONE WORLD**, and numerous others which I still have, collector that I am. Beat was the street style at the time, young students wearing black and being cool, but Ferlinghetti was never a fashion trendy. I saw the same ironies in his poetry that were later to appear in the panels of Crumb.

North Beach is now a gentrified hangout for affluent businesspeople, but City Lights is still there. You know it's 1991 by the metal detector next to the front counter. c.g.

BUSHWHACKING IN THE NINETIES

And speaking of the Brain Police, I see those worthies raided a porno theater in Sarasota, Florida, in late July and busted Paul Reubens for whacking off in the privacy of his own row. Paul is better known as Pee-wee Herman and he told the upholders of pubic morality his real name! The penalty for this terrible crime against nature and the citizenry is 60 days or a $500 fine. Local papers are running articles advising parents how to explain Peewee's bust to their kids. Expect the straight media to have a party destroying Peewee's rep. My God, he actually smoked a joint when he was eighteen!

Florida has got to be an incredible place. This is where the 2 Live Crew got busted for doing their show and just last week a couple of people were having sex in the privacy of their own apartment when a neighbor sneaked up and video taped their activity through the blinds. Now any rational person would have expected this peeping tom to be busted and thrown in the slam, but not in Florida. No, the police busted the couple! Do they bug the computers in the video rental outlets? Keep lists of those who rent **DEBBIE DOES DALLAS?** Have they got peepholes in the hotel rooms? A friend tells me the state is very big on wet t-shirt contests [for women only], but simulated orgasm contests are a no-no.

CHOP STRIPS

I get both the San Francisco **CHRONICLE** and the Oakland **TRIBUNE** these days so I see two versions of the Sunday comic strips. I always thought they were the same, but lo and behold on July 28, 1991, a friend of mine showed me Lynn Johnson's **FOR BETTER OR WORSE** and two panels had been edited from her Sunday in the **CHRONICLE**! What kind of crap is this? You don't chop up a cartoonist's work like that. It's bad enough that the **TRIBUNE** cuts costs by reducing the comics, but for some editor to decide how a cartoonist's strip will be seen is bullshit. The **TRIB** cuts up **DOONESBURY** and runs the panels down the right side of a page, not it might come as a surprise to the editor who commits this atrocity, but a cartoonist thinks of a Sunday page as an overall image and a panel is usually drawn to relate to the one next to it. Try to imagine any page of **LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND** being chopped up and laid out differently. Impossible. You wouldn't believe how small Gary Larson's **FAR SIDE** panel is in the daily **TRIBUNE**. We have to read it with a magnifying glass! c.g.

What if movie titles were long?

THE MAN WHO MIGHT HAVE KNOWN TOO MUCH BUT DIDN'T BECAUSE HIS TRAIN WAS LATE AND HE COULDN'T GET A CAB

THE MAN IN THE DOUBLE-BREASTED PEN-STRIPED GREY SUIT WITH THE PEARL BUTTONS AND THE SLIGHTLY PINKISH LINING.

S. Clay Wilson's newest show is at the La Luz de Jesus Gallery, 7400 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046. **Toxic Icons** will run August 2-31. Call 213-651-4875 for info.

I saw the novel, which at my maturity was the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art that, whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought, the most obvious emotion. It was an art in which words were subordinate to images, where personality was worn down to the inevitable low gear of collaboration. As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best-selling novelist as archaic as silent pictures.

--F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The need of people to act out their power agendas often overwhelms more serious needs. That's why the university is not a very efficient place. We now let graduate students sit in on faculty meetings, and they are often amazed by what they see. They expect that because these people have tenure, they'll be secure, but what they find is that they're very petty and focused on trivialities.

--Robin Lakoff